Dr. King's legacy: No borders in the workers' struggle!

January 19 will officially mark the 40th anniversary of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. federal holiday, a demand won through many years of grassroots struggle. If he were alive today, King would have celebrated his 97th birthday on Jan. 15. Dr. King dedicated his entire adult life to fighting for Civil Rights for African Americans, especially in the Deep South during the 1950s and 1960s.

"The greatest purveyor of violence in the world : my own government"
Fund People's Needs, Not
U.S./NATO WARS!
UNITED ANTI-WAR COALITION
unac.peace

PHOTO: UNAC

And during the last year of his life, King showed concrete support for striking Black sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee, while simultaneously calling for an end to the Vietnam war, a war he characterized as immoral. Linking the struggles against white supremacy, for workers' rights and against imperialist wars was uppermost on his political agenda of activism.

Nothing has fundamentally changed since Dr. King was murdered regarding the domination of imperialism, a system rooted in worldwide capitalism that still exists, although today it is in a much greater stage of decay. President Donald Trump symbolizes this decay with his blatant campaign to whitewash U.S. history by removing references to Black struggles and the legacy of enslavement.

Despite this decay, a rapid collapse of the system must not be taken for granted. We are witnessing a desperate and violent system that targets the rights of workers and oppressed peoples in the Global South and the Global North.

Just ask the people of Venezuela. They recently experienced the bombing of their country and having their elected President Nicolás Maduro and his spouse, Cilia Flores, illegally kidnapped by President Trump, the CIA and the Pentagon.

Or ask the people of Occupied Palestine, who are suffering from more than two years of a U.S.-backed genocide in Gaza and widespread terror in the West Bank perpetrated by the apartheid State of Israel.

Or ask the people of Iran who are battling violent anti-government protests cheered on by Trump, who seeks regime change in another oil rich country.

And there are numerous other U.S. threats against the sovereignty of other countries, such as Cuba, Colombia, Greenland, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria and ultimately China.

Imperialism at home

These U.S. imperialist attacks abroad are an extension of attacks inside the belly of the beast. Since Trump took over the reins of the presidency a year ago, he has expressed very clearly that he is no friend of the working class. He laid off tens of thousands of mainly Black federal workers and severely restricted food stamps and health care benefits, including gender-affirming care for transgender youth.

Trump declared a racist, xenophobic war on migrants that began last summer when he unleashed the ICE (Immigration and Custom Enforcement) stormtroopers in Los Angeles County. The main target of this war has been any migrant, documented or undocumented, perceived to originate from the Global South, especially Africa, Asia, the Caribbean or Latin America. Flaunting his racist bias, Trump has brazenly encouraged whites from South Africa and Scandinavian countries to migrate to the U.S.

And while the blatant murder of Renee Nicole Good — a 37-year-old, white, pro-migrant activist — by an ICE agent in Minneapolis has understandably garnered country-wide and international attention, there have been an untold number of migrants illegally and inhumanely detained, brutally attacked and killed by ICE since Trump took office. Non-migrants such as Keith Porter — a young Black man in Los Angeles who was killed by an off-duty ICE agent this past New Year's Eve — are targeted. Two Venezuelan migrants, labeled as drug dealers without evidence, were shot and wounded in Portland, Oregon, by ICE on the day after Good lost her life.

When Dr. King led his first antiwar march in Chicago in March 1967, he stated, "The bombs in Vietnam explode at home — they destroy the dream and possibility for a decent America." This quote, while not put in revolutionary class terms, still made the following important point: There are two fronts to the same ruling-class war against workers — here and abroad. And this connection must continue to guide the global anti-imperialist movement today. ☐

MUNDO OBRERO
WORKERS WORLD

workers.org